The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

For Immediate Release
Dec. 28, 1999

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CLEVELAND FEATURED IN RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS AT CMA

CLEVELAND — When photographer Jeff Brouws visited Cleveland for the first time in 1995, he described himself as "awestruck." Now Cleveland is the focal point of a series of photographs by Brouws on the changing and evolving American city, presented in the exhibition **Jeff Brouws Photographs of Cleveland: A City Renewed**. The photographs are part of Brouws' "American Cities Project," for which he also traveled to Buffalo, Detroit, Gary, and Las Vegas. It is an outgrowth of his earlier series on America's highways. The free exhibition will run at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) from Jan. 15 to Mar. 15, 2000.

Essentially self-taught in the medium, Brouws began taking photographs as a teenager and spent 15 years doing commercial work in California. He uses a 2-1/4 x 2-1/4 Hasselblad and standard photography supplies (100 ASA daylight Fuji print film, type-c prints).

Growing up in the American West, Brouws had never witnessed such a densely industrial landscape as the Flats of the Cuyahoga River. Brouws' impression of aging and decay — industrial and architectural — piqued his longtime interest in the American culture's abandonment of the old for the new. During a return trip to Cleveland in 1998, he absorbed more about the downtown and midtown corridor renewal begun in the 1980s, and massive new housing developments in the suburbs.

Brouws found he liked working in the diffused, even light of Cleveland's gray days; in this atmosphere a brick warehouse wall can become a soft, subtle mauve, and weedpatches or clumps of grass clippings, a rich teal. His large square format gives a monumental quality to such subjects as a thriving horse chestnut tree in a modest neighborhood whose backdrop is railroad freight cars and factory buildings. Routinely using a small aperture, he captures minute details from foreground to background. He hints at traces of human activity in such elements as a sprawling junk heap, billowing steam from a steel mill, a cloud of dust from a partially demolished suburban house, or the freshly manicured yard of a brand new home in Hough.

Says curator of contemporary art and photography Tom Hinson, who organized the exhibition: "The photographs of Jeff Brouws convey the complexity and power of Cleveland's landscape with its towering smokestacks and miles of power lines, train tracks, and commercial conduits. His pictures come with a timely relevance as the city deals with the decline of lower Euclid Avenue and brown fields along the midtown corridor. With a sense of optimism, he presents efforts at revitalization in their initial stages when the challenge of the project is most obvious, providing us a fresh perspective on a city we think we know."

For more information on the CMA and its events, call **1-888-CMA-0033** or visit **www.clemusart.com**.

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